

strategy and tactics. military

Military strategy and tactics are essential to the conduct of warfare. Broadly stated, strategy is the planning, coordination, and general direction of military operations to meet overall political and military objectives. Tactics implement strategy by short-term decisions on the movement of troops and employment of WEAPONS on the field of battle. The great military theorist Carl von CLAUSEWITZ put it another way: "Tactics is the art of using troops in battle; strategy is the art of using battles to win the war." Strategy and tactics, however, have been viewed differently in almost every era of history. The change in the meaning of these terms over time has been basically one of scope as the nature of WAR and society has changed and as technology has changed. Strategy, for example, literally means "the art of the general" (from the Greek strategos) and originally signified the purely military planning of a campaign. Thus until the 17th and 18th centuries strategy included to varying degrees such problems as FORTIFICATION, maneuver, and supply. In the 19th and 20th centuries, however, with the rise of mass ideologies, vast conscript armies, global alliances, and rapid technological change, military strategy became difficult to distinguish from "grand strategy," that is, the proper planning and utilization of the entire resources of a society—military, technological, economic, and political. The change in the scope and meaning of tactics over time has been largely due to enormous changes in technology. Tactics have always been difficult—and have become increasingly difficult—to distinguish in reality from strategy because the two are so interdependent. (Indeed, in the 20th century, tactics have been termed operational strategy.) Strategy is limited by what tactics are possible; given the size, training, and morale of forces, type and number of weapons available, terrain, weather, and quality and location of enemy forces, the tactics to be used are dependent on strategic considerations.

Strategic and Tactical Principles of Warfare

Military commanders and theorists throughout history have formulated what they considered to be the most important strategic and tactical principles of war. Napoleon I, for example, had 115 such principles. The Confederate general Nathan Bedford Forrest had but one: "Get there first with the most men." Some of the most commonly cited principles are the objective, the offensive, surprise, security, unity of command, economy of force, mass, and maneuver. Most are interdependent.

Military forces, whether large-scale or small-scale, must have a clear objective that is followed despite possible distractions. Only offensive operations—seizing and exploiting the initiative—however, will allow the choice of objectives; the offense also greatly increases the possibility of surprise (stealth and deception) and security (protection against being surprised or losing the possibility of surprising the enemy). Unity of command, or cooperation, is essential to the pursuit of objectives, the ability to use all forces effectively (economy of force), and the concentration of superior force at a critical point (mass). Maneuver consists of the various ways in which troops can be deployed and moved to obtain offensive, mass, and surprise. A famous example that illustrates most of these principles occurred during World War II when the Allied forces eventually agreed on the objective of defeating Germany first with a direct offensive against the European continent. Under a combined command headed by Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, they effectively massed their forces in England, deceived Germany regarding the point of invasion, collected intelligence on the disposition of German forces, and set the vast maneuver called Operation Overlord into motion (see NORMANDY INVASION).

Unthinking rigid attention to a principle of war, however, can be unfortunate. In the face of two Japanese naval forces, Adm. William Halsey's decision at Leyte Gulf not to divide the fleet (the principle of mass) led to the pitting of the entire enormous American naval force against a decoy Japanese fleet. Division of the fleet (maneuver) would still have left Halsey superior to both Japanese forces.

Strategic and Tactical Maneuvers

Classification of actual military types of maneuvers and their variations have long been a part of military science. New technology and weapons have not drastically altered some of the classical types of offensive maneuver: penetration, envelopment, defensive-offensive maneuvers, and turning movements.

The penetration—one of the oldest maneuvers—is a main attack that attempts to pierce the enemy line while secondary attacks up and down the enemy line prevent the freeing of the enemy reserves. A favorite maneuver of the duke of Marlborough (early 18th century), it was also used by Gen. Bernard Montgomery at El ALAMEIN (1942).

The envelopment is a maneuver in which a secondary attack attempts to hold the enemy's center while one (single envelopment) or both flanks (double envelopment) of the enemy are attacked or overlapped in a push to the

Military strategy and tactics are concerned with the conduct of war and are distinguished by the nature of the objectives and the scope of the operations. Military strategy is concerned with the overall political and military objectives. Tactics are concerned with the conduct of operations. The distinction between strategy and tactics is not always clear. In the history of war, the great military strategist, Carl von Clausewitz, has defined strategy as the art of using battle to win the war. Strategy and tactics, however, have been viewed differently in almost every era of history. The change in the meaning of these terms over time has been basically one of scope as the nature of the war and society has changed and as technology has advanced. Strategy, for example, formerly meant "the art of the general" (from the Greek strategos) and originally signified the overall military planning of a campaign. Today, the term has been broadened to include the planning of operations, the planning of the campaign, the planning of the theater, and the planning of the war. The change in the meaning of these terms over time has been basically one of scope as the nature of the war and society has changed and as technology has advanced. Strategy, for example, formerly meant "the art of the general" (from the Greek strategos) and originally signified the overall military planning of a campaign. Today, the term has been broadened to include the planning of operations, the planning of the campaign, the planning of the theater, and the planning of the war. The change in the meaning of these terms over time has been basically one of scope as the nature of the war and society has changed and as technology has advanced. Strategy, for example, formerly meant "the art of the general" (from the Greek strategos) and originally signified the overall military planning of a campaign. Today, the term has been broadened to include the planning of operations, the planning of the campaign, the planning of the theater, and the planning of the war.

Strategic and Tactical Principles of Warfare

Military commanders and thinkers throughout history have formulated what they considered to be the most important strategic and tactical principles of war. Clausewitz, for example, had 112 such principles. The Chinese general Sun Tzu, in his famous work "The Art of War," had 13 principles. Some of the most commonly cited principles are the objective, the offensive, the defense, security, unity of command, economy of force, mass, and maneuver. These are interdependent.

Military forces, whether large-scale or small-scale, must have a clear objective that is feasible and attainable. Only offensive operations—action and extension of the initiative—will allow the division of objectives. The offense also greatly increases the possibility of surprise (both in attack and in defense) and security (protection against being surprised or losing the possibility of surprising the enemy). Unity of command, or cooperation, is essential to the pursuit of objectives. The ability to use all forces effectively (economy of force) and the concentration of superior force at a critical point (mass). Moreover, economy of the various ways in which troops can be deployed and moved to obtain offensive, mass, and surprise. A famous example that illustrates most of these principles occurred during the Battle of Austerlitz in 1805. When the Allied forces eventually agreed on the objective of defeating Germany first with a first offensive against the European continent, under a combined command headed by General D. B. Scherzer, they effectively missed the opportunity of German forces, and so the vast Russian called Operation Overland into motion (see NORMANBY INVASION).

Uniting right attention to a principle of war, however, can be dangerous in the face of two Japanese navy forces. Admiral Yamamoto's decision at Leyte (but not to divide the fleet) (the principle of mass) led to the sinking of the entire enormous American navy force against a deadly Japanese force. Division of the fleet (maneuver) would have left Halsey's superior to both Japanese forces.

Strategic and Tactical Principles

Classification of some military types of movements and their consequences have long been a part of military science. New technology and weapons have not drastically altered some of the classical types of offensive maneuvers: penetration, envelopment, defense-offense maneuver, and turning movements.

The penetration—one of the oldest maneuvers—is a main attack that attempts to pierce the enemy line while secondary attacks are made down the enemy line to prevent the enemy from recovering. A famous maneuver of the late 19th century (early 20th century) was also used by General Bernhard von Soltmann at the Battle of the Marston (1842).

The envelopment is a maneuver in which a secondary attack attempts to hold the enemy's center while one attacks the envelopment or both flanks (double envelopment) of the enemy are attacked or overlapped in a push to the

enemy's rear in order to threaten the enemy's communications and line of retreat. This forces the enemy to fight in several directions and possibly be destroyed in position. New variations include vertical envelopments (AIRBORNE TROOPS or airmobile troops) and amphibious envelopments. Noted single envelopments were accomplished by Alexander the Great at Arbela (or Gaugamela, 331 BC), Robert E. Lee at Chancellorsville (1863), and Erwin Rommel at Gazala (1942; leading to the capture of Tobruk); famous double envelopments include those of Hannibal at the Battle of CANNAE (216 BC), the American Revolutionary War Battle of COWPENS (1781), and the destruction of the 7th German Army at the Falaise Gap (1944).

Defensive-offensive maneuvers include attack from a strong defensive position after the attacking enemy has been sapped in strength, as in two battles of the Hundred Years' War, CRECY (1346) and AGINCOURT (1415), or feigned withdrawals that attempt to lure the enemy out of position as performed by William the Conqueror at the Battle of HASTINGS (1066) and by Napoleon at the Battle of AUSTERLITZ (1805).

Turning maneuvers are indirect approaches that attempt to swing wide around an enemy's flank to so threaten an enemy's supply and communication lines that the enemy is forced to abandon a strong position or be cut off and encircled. Napoleon was a master of the turning movement, using it many times between 1796 and 1812. Robert E. Lee used the maneuver at the Second Battle of BULL RUN (1862); the German drive to the French coast in 1940 was another example.

THE HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGY AND TACTICS

The historical roots of strategy and tactics date back to the origins of human warfare and the development of large-scale government and empire. The dense tactical infantry formation of overlapping shields called the phalanx, for example, existed in an early form in ancient Sumar (c.3000 BC). The development of strategy and tactics parallels to some extent the growth, spread, and clash of civilizations; technological discoveries and refinements; and the evolution of modern state power, ideology, and nationalism.

Early Strategy and Tactics

The Mediterranean basin saw the dawn of modern military strategy and tactics. It was under such leaders as Philip II (382-336 BC) and Alexander the Great (356-323 BC) of Macedonia and Hannibal (247-183 BC) of Carthage that the first great strides were made in military science. Philip combined INFANTRY, CAVALRY, and primitive ARTILLERY into a trained, organized, and maneuverable fighting force backed up by engineers and a rudimentary signaling system. His son Alexander became an accomplished strategist and tactician with his concern for planning, keeping open lines of communication and supply, security, relentless pursuit of foes, and the use of surprise. Hannibal was a supreme tactician whose crushing victories taught the Romans that the flexible attack tactics of their legions needed to be supplemented by unity of command and an improved cavalry. The Romans eventually replaced their citizen-soldiers with a paid professional army whose training, equipment, skill at fortification, road building, and siege warfare became legendary. The Byzantine emperors studied Roman strategy and tactics and wrote some of the first essays on the subject.

The Middle Ages saw a decline in the study and application of strategy—with the exception of the great Mongol conqueror Genghis Khan. Medieval tactics began with an emphasis on defensive fortifications, siegecraft, and armored cavalry. The introduction, however, of such new developments as the crossbow, longbow, halberd, pike, and, above all, GUNPOWDER began to revolutionize the conduct of war.

The Emergence of Modern Warfare

Gustav II Adolf, king of Sweden (r. 1611-32), has been called the father of modern tactics because he reintroduced maneuver into military science. His disciplined national standing army—differing from the common use of mercenaries—was organized into small, mobile units armed with highly superior, maneuverable firepower and supplemented by mounted dragoons (his creation) armed with carbine and saber. Frederick II (the Great) of Prussia (r. 1740-86), the master of initiative and mass, conducted war in an age of limited warfare—armies were small and expensive; road and supply systems were inadequate. In the SEVEN YEARS' WAR (1756-63), Frederick faced a coalition whose various forces almost surrounded Prussia. Using a strategy of interior lines, Frederick—supported by a highly disciplined army and horse artillery (his creation)—would quickly maneuver, assemble a superior force at some decisive point along the line of encirclement, and, with massed HOWITZER fire, strike hard against an enemy flank before moving to another point.

With Napoleon I, however, the age of modern warfare was born (see NAPOLEONIC WARS). The French

Revolution (see FRENCH REVOLUTIONARY WARS) had produced a mass patriot army organized into loose divisional formations. Napoleon carefully planned his campaigns and quickly maneuvered his troops by forced marches to a selected field of battle. His battles began with skirmishing and cannonading, followed by an overwhelming concentration of forces in shock BAYONET attacks against enemy flanks in turning and enveloping movements designed to utterly destroy opposing forces. Because of the greater complexities of warfare, a rudimentary GENERAL STAFF began to emerge under Napoleon.

The 19th Century: Theory and Technological Change

Napoleonic strategy and tactics were closely studied by the first great theorists of war, the Prussian general Carl von Clausewitz (1780-1831) and the French general Antoine Jomini (1779-1869). Clausewitz's *On War* (1832-34; Eng. trans., 1908) emphasized the close relationship between war and national policy and the importance of the principles of mass, economy of force, and the destruction of enemy forces. Jomini, on the other hand, emphasized occupying enemy territory through carefully planned, rapid, and precise geometric maneuvers. Whereas Jomini's theories had influence in France and North America, Clausewitz's teachings in particular were influential on the great Prussian military strategists of the 19th century, Helmuth von MOLTKE—architect of victory in the Franco-Prussian War (1870)—and Alfred von SCHLIEFFEN—creator of the Schlieffen plan (defense against Russia and envelopment of France), which Germany applied in a modified form at the beginning of World War I.

The 19th century was an era of far-reaching technological change that vastly altered the scope of tactics and strategy, an alteration seen in what has been called the first total war, the U.S. CIVIL WAR. Railroads and steamships increased the volume, reach, and speed of mobilization and of CONSCRIPTION. The consistent support of war industry became critical. The growth in range and accuracy of rifle firepower (see FIREARMS) created new tactical problems: artillery had to be placed farther behind the lines, massed charges became ineffective if not disastrous (see GETTYSBURG, BATTLE OF), cavalry became limited to reconnaissance and skirmish, and troops began to fight from trenches and use the GRENADE and the land MINE. Telegraph communications linked widening theaters of war and made large-scale strategy and tactics possible. During the U.S. Civil War the large-scale strategy of the North (BLOCKADE, division of the Confederacy, destruction of the Confederate armies and supplies) backed by superior industry and manpower were the key factors in its victory. The development of the MACHINE GUN late in the 19th century would have its most telling effect in World War I.

World Wars: Trench Tactics to Nuclear Strategy

World War I began with immense, rapid, national mobilizations and classical offensive maneuvers, but after mutual attempts at envelopment at and after the Battle of the MARNE, stationary trench warfare ensued across a wide battlefield. A war of attrition set in that called for total national involvement in the war effort. Two key technological developments in the war were to fashion the strategic and tactical debates of the 1920s and 1930s. The use of airpower (see AIR FORCE; AIRCRAFT, MILITARY) was advocated by such theorists as Giulio Douhet (1869-1930), Billy MITCHELL, Henry ("Hap") ARNOLD, and Hugh Trenchard (1873-1956). They insisted that air power alone could win wars, not only by striking at enemy forces but by strategic bombing—the massive attack on cities, industries, and lines of communication and supply that characterized part of allied strategy during World War II. The other World War I development was that of motorized ARMORED VEHICLES such as the tank. The use of the tank as the new cavalry of the modern age was advocated by B. H. LIDDELL HART, Charles DE GAULLE, and J. F. C. Fuller (1878-1966) in the interwar period. The Germans were the first to effectively use the tactical offensive combination of air and tank power in the field of battle in the BLITZKRIEG, under such commanders as Heinz Guderian and Erwin Rommel, which conquered much of Europe in World War II.

The primary tactical advance in World War II may have been that of AMPHIBIOUS WARFARE. The principal significance of that war, however, was in the first application of truly global strategies wielded by massive coalitions dedicated once again to the offensive. The development of nuclear weapons, which continued after the war, introduced the new science of NUCLEAR STRATEGY and tactics. The immense destructive nature of these weapons, however, meant that warfare of limited strategic goals, using conventional tactics and conventional but technologically advanced weapons, would predominate in the "limited" wars that followed World War II. The very need to keep wars limited has produced a new strategic form: the small, mobile SPECIAL FORCE, armed with light but sophisticated weapons and trained in GUERRILLA tactics, that can be rapidly deployed and as rapidly withdrawn from hostile territory.

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See also: ARAB-ISRAELI WARS; PERSIAN GULF WAR; NAVAL VESSELS; NAVY.

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